



Ashlee Hudson

“Change does not roll in on the wheels of inevitability. But comes through continuous struggle. And so we must straighten our backs and work for our freedom.” Powerful words from Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. on change, injustice and struggle. When thinking about human rights and equality, one starts to wonder of the physical bondages and the mental oppression our ancestors endured in trying to make the world a better place. But, as Fredrick Douglas said, “If there is no struggle, there is no progress”, the hardships underwent were anticipated, some underestimated, but nevertheless overpowered and conquered. Both Fredrick Douglas and Dr. King believed in a better world despite the obstacles. Their undying belief was essential to the path of freedom because, as Aristotle said, “Belief is the key to everything.” Like Fredrick Douglas and Dr. King, Georgiana Symonette believed in a world of equality. She became an advocate for women’s equality. She thought that they should be recognized as people with rights, people who deserve social justice. She believed and that is what makes her a champion in her community.

Georgiana Symonette was born and educated in Wemyss Bight, Eleuthera. In a pursuit to follow her ambition, Georgiana Symonette migrated to Nassau to pursue nursing in the Bahamas

General Hospital. While working for the hospital, she observed the inequities of society when it came to women. The double standard fueled her passion and later led her to join three other ladies to form the Women's Suffrage Movement. Like the American Women's Suffrage Association founded by Lucy Stone and Julia Ward Howe, the organization embodied persistence. They were a united front with steel-like determination. In a time of struggle and hardship for women, they made it known that they were on a mission. Eventually because of their perseverance, Parliament passed an Act in 1961 thus allowing women to vote in the 1962 General Election in the Bahamas. Ms. Symonette later died in 1965.

That is what it means to me to be a champion; Georgiana Symonette supported something she believed in. She never lost her sense of self and she always knew what she wanted and pursued it. She knew her desires, she knew where she wanted to be and she knew her strengths and weaknesses. In observing her I learned that you must pursue something you believe in and give it your all because if you do not, there is no drive to complete it. If I want to make a change in my community, I need to have a passion for it because change does not come about easily and it is not accepted right away. Some need time to adjust. I learned that you need to know yourself before you try to exact change because once you initiate something, it takes persistence and endurance much like Ms. Symonette had in her journey to women's right to vote. I also learned that you need to know who you are and be confident in that because as Eleanor Roosevelt said "Do what you feel in your heart to be right—for you'll be criticized anyway. You'll be damned if you do, and damned if you don't."